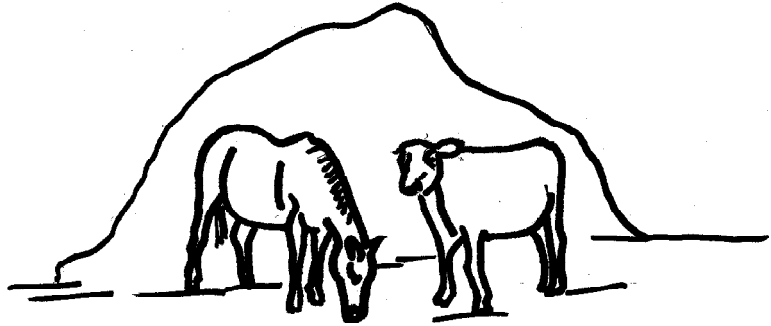




Manure Share Gardener's Guide

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

- 1) **DETERMINE YOUR NEEDS-** What quality and mix of material do you need? How much do you need?
- 2) **ARRANGE FOR A TRUCK-** Make arrangements for a vehicle to pick up the manure (a pick-up truck works great).
- 3) **PICK A SOURCE-** Review the table of sources from the Manure Share Source List to find material that meets your needs and is conveniently located.
- 4) **SCHEDULE PICK UP-** Call the farm that you have selected and arrange a time.
- 5) **COMPOST AT YOUR SITE-** Consult the Compost Hotline or your Conservation District you guidance.
- 6) **USE AS AMMENDMENT-** Once composted, apply as needed in your garden or landscape as a soil ammendment.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING A MANURE SOURCE:

1. **How much do you need?** Calculate volume needed (depth x area). Convert to Cubic Yards (27 cubic feet in one cubic yard). Plan for the number of truck loads required for target volume. Note: most pickups can only handle ¾-1 yard at a time. If you are getting a lot of material, chose a farm with a **Loader** or plan to spend a lot of time with your shovel loading your truck.
2. **Will you need to pick up the manure during the winter?** Some of the farms have manure piles that are not accessible during the winter (Check "Accessible" column on the source list).
3. **Are you looking for "Aged" or "Fresh" material?** Older material may be closer to "finished compost" than newer material. See the "Age" column. If you want old material, be sure to tell the farmer. Often the oldest material is at the back of the pile and the material at the front of the pile is from yesterday. Let the farmer know what you want; s/he may be able to load the older material for you. It is worth asking on the phone. NOTE: the only way to determine if a pile is composted properly is to have the pile tested (usually by a soil lab). To find out about compost testing, contact your Conservation District (206-764-3410).
4. **What is your end use?** If mulch for landscaping, a manure pile with mostly bedding is a good choice. However, for composting for your garden, a material with little or no bedding is better (check the "manure:bedding" column). Know that some beddings will compost faster (straw breaks down quicker and cedar shavings take a very long time).

(continued on back)



We connect folks who need compost and mulch with livestock owners who have surplus manure



Manure Share Gardener's Guide

As a general rule, a manure to bedding ratio of 1:1 or higher (1:0, 20:1, 3:1, etc.) is more desirable for composting.

5. Consider weed management!

Weeds can be a real problem with some compost piles. Contrary to popular belief, horses don't "poop" out significantly more weeds than cows. Weeds present in manure piles are generated primary from seeds of weed plants growing near the manure pile. Weed Control: One, keep the pile covered with a tarp to prevent weed seed invasion, and two, compost the pile. The heat and time involved in composted will kill most weed seeds. Because we can't vouch for the weed seed content of these manure piles, we highly encourage you to cover and compost this material for a month or two before applying it to your garden.

RELATED TOPICS:

Composting

- King Conservation District website:

www.kingcd.org

- Seattle Tilth's Compost Hotline at 206-633-0224

Manures & Gardening

- WSU Cooperative Extension

<http://gardening.wsu.edu>

Clopyralid in Compost

-WSU Cooperative Extension

<http://css.wsu.edu/compost/>

RAW MANURE	COMPOST
BENEFITS	
	Increases nutrient availability
	Increases Cation Exchange Capacity
	Increase micronutrients
Improves soil aggregation and structure	Improves soil structure
Improves water infiltration	Improves water availability
	Improves water holding capacity
	Dark color absorbs heat
	Helps suppress plant diseases
	Breaks up clay soils
	Binds sandy soils via microbial glues
Increases earthworm populations	Increases earthworm populations
	Reduces soil crusting
Feeds beneficial soil microbes	Increase microbial population
Increases soil aeration	Increases soil aeration
Suppress weeds when used as mulch	Makes weed pulling easier
Supplies Carbon & other essential minerals	Slow release of macro nutrients
	Uniform texture & consistency
	Eases cultivation
	Weed free
	Effective as a mulch
	Reduces leaching
	Reduces erosion
	Reduces soil compaction
	Lightweight & easy to move
	Improves drought tolerance
RISKS	
May contain weed seeds	NOTE: The herbicide clopyralid may not break down in the composting process
May contain plant pathogenic microbes	
May contain pesticide residues	
High Carbon to Nitrogen ratio reduces nutrient availability of organic material	
Ties up soil N if Carbon:Nitrogen ratio is high	
Low Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC)	
Inconsistent moisture content	
Large particle size	
Low microbial activity	
Low humic acid & fulvic acid content	
High variability of nutrient content and availability	

Adapted from *Organic Farming: Principles and Practices*. Amigo Cantisano. Organic Ag Advisors. 1998. P.O. Box 942; No. San Juan, CA 95960. orgamigo@jps.net

